

A black and white photograph showing a cemetery with several tombstones. The tombstones are marked with the Swastika symbol. In the background, a large, multi-story building is visible. The image is grainy and has a historical feel.

The Indiana Jewish
Post & Opinion

One Dollar

According to Peace Now, which monitors settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, some 50 new settlement sites were established without government approval since Sharon came to power in February 2001.

Rona's Roving Reports

Join a synagogue, study Judaism, golf for charity

By RONA TRACHTENBERG
State Fair-well

You only have a few more days until the end of this year's State Fair.

If you haven't taken the opportunity to visit the JCC's kosher (Hebrew National) hot dog concession stand, this is your last chance.

The volunteers will be there with a smile and some great food from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., through Aug. 18.

CST picnic

On Sunday, Aug. 18, 4 p.m., Congregation Shaarey Tefilla members and prospective members will enjoy the annual picnic at the back of the JCC.

The fee for great food, family activity and fun for all ages is \$7.50 (adults), \$5.50 (children 6-12) and \$2.50 (children 1-5). Special dishes for vegetarians will be provided.

If anyone still wants to attend and hasn't made a reservation, please call CST vice-president of membership Michael Meyers, at 879-9210.

BEZ Men's Club picnic

On Sunday, Aug. 18, 4 p.m., Congregation Beth-El Zedeck's membership committee and Men's Club is sponsoring a free "getting to know you" picnic.

All new and prospective members along with Beth-El Zedeck members are invited for a day of hot dogs, chips, drinks, watermelon, relay races and other games.

This is a great opportunity to meet the Rabbis, Cantor, ask about the synagogue programs and learn more about the Beth-El Zedeck congregational family.

If anyone still wants to attend and hasn't made a reservation, please call the synagogue office at 253-3441.

Golf charity outing

On Monday, Aug. 19, 11:30 a.m., Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital and Indianapolis' Methodist Hospital will team up for a charity golf outing at the Country Club of Indianapolis, with the proceeds shared between the two facilities.

After registration and lunch,

tee time will begin at 1 p.m.

A foursome costs \$1,000 and a single player can enter for only \$250. The fee includes registration gift, driving range, lunch, greens fees, cart, gourmet awards dinner and a chance to win fabulous prizes.

Cosponsors are the Indianapolis Chapter of Hadassah and the Clarian Health Foundation.

To register or for more information, please contact Don Deutsch at Clarian Health Foundation, 962-6346.

Tuesday Golden Age Club

On Tuesday, Aug. 20, 11:30 a.m., the JCC's Golden Age Club will be hosting its on-going Tuesday program featuring an exercise class from 11:30 to 12 noon, followed by a sumptuous kosher lunch of baked chicken, rice pilaf, broccoli, fruit, coffee, and tea.

The fee for the exercise class is 75 cents and \$1.50 for the lunch. For more information, please call the JCC (251-9467).

Jewish Singles Meeting

On Tuesday, Aug. 20, 7 p.m., the Jewish singles discussion

group will meet to share thoughts on "My People's Prayerbook — The Sh'ma and its Blessings."

For location, please call Ed at 876-1201.

A taste of adult education

On Wednesday, Aug. 21, 7 p.m., the community is invited for a "taste" of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School at the BJE.

First-year Melton teacher Jeremy Kridel will teach a lesson on Rosh Hashanah, followed by a dessert reception with all of the Melton teachers.

This sampling of education is intended to show potential enrollees how wonderful this program will be.

The goal of the Melton program is to offer adults the opportunity to master the essential building blocks of our Jewish heritage in an informal, part-time framework.

There are no grades and no exams. The only requirement of this multi-denominational and non-doctrinaire program is the student's willingness to devote one evening per week for two

academic years to the pursuit of Jewish knowledge.

The Thursday evening classes, 7 to 9:15 p.m., begin the week of Sept. 16. An additional Tuesday morning session, 9 to 11:15 a.m., has just been added.

To attend the Aug. 21 event, please RSVP by calling 255-3124 by Aug. 20.

Deadline for kids program

Wednesday, Aug. 21 is the deadline to register for the BJE's Aug. 25 free children's Rosh Hashanah program, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Come to the BJE and celebrate the sweetness of the New Year with your preschool-aged children. Learn about the traditions of Rosh Hashanah while engaging in stories and crafts with family and friends.

Please RSVP by calling 255-2134, ext. 706.

Holiday luncheon

Wednesday, Aug. 21 is the deadline to RSVP for the Jules Dorfman Yiddish Club High Holiday luncheon on Sunday, Aug. 25, 1 p.m.

The guest speaker will be Rabbi Raphael Nemetsky of the Hasten Hebrew Academy.

The menu will consist of brisket, tzimmes, salad, dinner rolls, honey cake, apples with honey, tea and coffee.

The program costs \$5 per person.

Please make your reservation by calling Naomi at 251-9467 ext. 227.

Thursday Golden Age Club

On Thursday, Aug. 22, 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., the JCC's Golden Age Club will be hosted.

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EL AL is proud to announce a new frequent flyer partnership with Delta Airlines. Members of EL AL and Delta frequent flyer clubs can now earn and redeem mileage/points when flying on either airline to any destination.

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Congresswoman Julia Carson pro-Israel—wants your input

By RONA TRACHTENBERG

Rep. Julia Carson, D-Ind., addressing a large gathering of Indianapolis Jews at the Board of Jewish Education reiterated her personal support for Israel.

"My record speaks for itself," said Carson, who has just celebrated her 30th year serving the public.

This gathering was the fourth in a series of public discussions titled "A community briefing — get to know the Indiana congressional delegation" co-sponsored by AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council). The three previous speakers were Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., and Reps. Mike Pence and Steve Buyer, Republicans.

Carson stated her positions on several local issues, but the audience was most eager to hear her viewpoints on Israel.

"I strive to learn about and give respect to other cultures," smiled Carson as she reminisced about her 1997 visit to Israel the day after the Jerusalem market bombing.

"I loved Israel and got a chance to understand Jewish customs firsthand. I was riding in a hotel elevator when it got stuck. I subsequently learned that I was visiting Israel during the High Holy season and when the holiday started, the elevator stopped. Everything in the country stopped." She continues to support Israel through her legislation on foreign aid, including military and economic assistance for rebuilding the damage from terrorist acts.

She is co-sponsor of the Syrian Accountability Act, HR 4483, introduced in the House by Reps. Dick Armey, R-Texas,

and Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., and in the Senate, S2215, introduced by Sens. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Rick Santorum, R-Pa.

The bill's premise is that Syria is a leading sponsor and center of international terrorism, occupies Lebanon despite a United Nations resolution to withdraw, serves as a major conduit for illegal Iraqi oil exports, and continues to develop weapons of mass destruction and therefore, should be sanctioned as are other countries on the U.S. terrorist list.

This legislation would impose sanctions on Syria until President Bush certifies that Syria has ceased its wrongdoing. Sanctions include a ban on military and dual-use exports to Syria; a ban on any financial assistance to U.S. businesses for their investment or other activities in Syria; downgrading the U.S. diplomatic representation to Syria and travel restrictions on Syrian diplomats in the U.S.

In speaking of terrorism, Carson said she is convinced that on Sept. 11, "FBI, CIA and National Security Agencies all messed up because they weren't speaking to each other. I was shocked to learn that the NSA doesn't even have computers that work. I voted against the Homeland Security Act because it will cost \$40 billion and take 10 years to get up and running. Maybe when the bill comes back from the Senate I'll be in a better position to support it."

From the audience, Beverly Newman applauded Carson's vote against the Home Security Act and added, "The various intelligence agencies should go to the public library

and read all the books pertaining to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons in the hands of the various nations in the Middle East. It is completely well documented. All I do is go to the library and the Internet and I seem to know more than the people who are running these agencies. How is that possible? Maybe the agencies are just not reading or listening.

"I've seen videos that absolutely document many of the different terrorist cells based here in the US," Newman said, "where the members of the Muslim fundamentalist organizations are very bold in what they are claiming they are going to do. I've seen these videos and I don't have any security clearance. It seems to me

Continued on page 5

Kreuscher heads dance company

Former president of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Wayne Kreuscher has been elected the new president of Dance Kaleidoscope.

The contemporary dance company has long been closely associated with the Jewish community. For many years, its artistic director was Cherri Jaffee. Today it is led by David Hochoy, a former rehearsal director and principal dancer with Martha Graham in New York City.

Kreuscher is on the board of trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and is a member of Reform Judaism's Commission of Social Action.

Elected vice president of education and touring is Gerda Fogle. Fogle is a past president of DK and has served on its board for 11 years.

Dance Kaleidoscope's



Wayne Kreuscher

2002-2003 30th anniversary season begins Oct. 4-6, with COLE!, performed at the Indianapolis Civic Theatre. Tickets are available by calling 940-6555.

CORRECTION

On page IN 3 of our August 7 issue, the P-O inadvertently published a picture of Marcy Meyers with the Emily Harry bat mitzvah story. It should have been printed, properly titled as a photo of Marcy Meyers with Ms. Meyers' bat mitzvah story. We regret the error and any hurt feelings that resulted from it.



Emily Harry



Marcy Meyers

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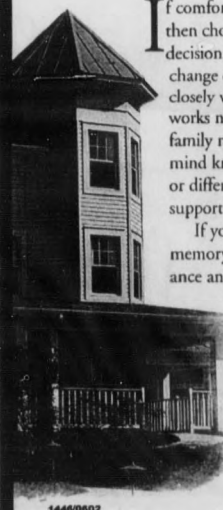
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Critic's Corner

Sweet play at the Phoenix Theatre

By CHARLES EPSTEIN

"The Action against Sol Schumann" is playing on the Phoenix Theatre's Under-



ground stage. True, this is another play about the Holocaust but it really is different, as it takes place in 1985, the year President Reagan went to visit Bitburg.

The plot concerns Sol Schumann being recognized as a *kapo*, a Jewish guard in a concentration camp ordered to carry out Nazi commands, which included the whipping, torture and killing of Jewish prisoners. Schumann's dilemma was choosing to be a *kapo* or being killed himself.

America cannot prosecute its citizens for crimes they committed in some other

country; however, America can strip the citizenship it granted to someone who lied on the application form for permission to enter the United States. The punishment is deportation.

The deportation court case is the basis for Jeffrey Sweet's powerful and poignant drama. Make no mistake; there is plenty of comedy amid the stark drama.

The audience was on the edge of their seats, riveted to the events happening on stage. Sweet's dialogue has no dull spots. He certainly knows his extremely difficult craft of playwriting. This tense and taut drama flowed magically across the stage, with no intermission.

The leading character in Sweet's extraordinary play is not Sol Schumann, but his son, Aaron, masterfully performed by Robert K. Johansen, reprising the role he originated at the Victory Gardens in Chicago. Bill Simmons plays his brother Michael, an equally difficult role. Michael has assimilated



Left to right: Bill Simmons (as Michael), Lisa Cesnik (as Leah), Rob Johansen (as Aaron), and Fred Blumenthal (as Sol), discuss the charges brought against Sol Schumann. The production continues through August 25. Photo by Dave Ruark.

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himself into the community by being nonpolitical and by marrying a non-Jewish woman. Indeed, this is the best performance I have seen by Simmons.

Fred Blumenthal plays the title role of the elderly father. Jeff Casazza portrays Paul and newcomer Marc Allan Hardy plays numerous roles

to the hilt. I am sure we will see the talented Hardy in many more Indianapolis productions.

The four women in this production were equally up to the task of performing brilliantly. Diane Kondrat, Lisa Cesnik, Lauren Bertram and another welcomed newcomer, Sharon McDonald

comprised the talented distaff side.

The acting company was superb. The varied shadings and rhythms of Sweet's dialogue were fantastic. The comedic timing was perfect.

Two memorable scenes stand out: When the arrogant Aaron is asked if he has ever forgiven anybody. And the emotionally charged scene when the frustrated Aaron interviews a witness to his father's good deeds in the concentration camp. McDonald plays the woman Sol Schumann helped keep alive in the camp. However, she is reluctant to testify because she will then have to admit she witnessed the hideous, vile and repugnant misdeeds of *Kapo* Sol Schumann. Her confirmation of Schumann's crimes keeps her from testifying.

I went to see "The Action against Sol Schumann" with mixed emotions. How many plays about the Holocaust can one endure? However, I was thoroughly captivated with Sweet's script and the acting company. I can easily say that this production receives my highest recommendation.

The play closes Aug. 25.

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RRR

Continued from page 2

ing its on-going Thursday contemporary issues discussion, exercise class and kosher lunch of hot dog on bun, sauerkraut, french fries, fruit, coffee, Coffee Rich and tea.

The fee for the exercise class is 75 cents and \$1.50 for the lunch. For more information, please call the JCC (251-9467).

IHC youth Shabbat

On Friday, Aug. 23, 6 p.m., the IFTY teens of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation will lead Shabbat services for their peers and families.

This is a perfect opportunity for teens to meet the youth group advisors and hear about their plans for the coming year.

Bring your lawn chairs, as the service will be conducted outside, camp-style. Also, bring a picnic dinner to enjoy after the services.

In case of rain, the event will be moved indoors.

Hitler's artwork exhibited

New York *Newsday* writer Karin Lipson recently published an article that the Williams College Museum of Art in Massachusetts is currently exhibiting two watercolors by Adolph Hitler among their 250-piece show titled, "Prelude to a Nightmare: Art, Politics and Hitler's Early Years in Vienna 1906-1913."

Museum curator Deborah Rothschild said, "His youthful watercolors haven't drawn much flak and attendance has been very high. It was in Vienna where Hitler latched on to anti-Semitism and racist literature. It's ironic that his piece, 'Mountain Chapel,' was commissioned by a Jewish art dealer for a Jewish client.

Elections scare Jews

Tony Czuczka of the Associated Press writes that, "The parliamentary election in September is shaping up as a test of German reflexes as much of Europe moves to the right. Alarming for many, even open anti-Semitism has been revived in German mainstream politics as well as cultural life."

Andrei Markovits, a Ger-

man history professor at the University of Michigan, explained that in 1990, when east and west reunited, a big Germany of 83 million people was created at the heart of Europe. So now the candidates are campaigning on 'national identity.' To accomplish this goal, he said, the Germans need to exorcise Auschwitz.

Wolfgang Benz, head of the Center for Anti-Semitism Studies at Berlin's Technical University, agrees that, "Latent resentment of Jews has been around for years, but no democratic party ever set its sights on it." Until now.

Juergen Moelleman, the deputy leader of the Free Democratic Party and an Arab supporter, stirred outrage when he warned Michel Friedman, a Jewish TV talk show host, that he might fuel anti-Semitism with his "intolerant, spiteful style."

Forced to apologize, Moelleman said he was just asserting Germans' right to criticize Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians. But many critics felt he was insinuating that Jews are to blame for anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitic stereotypes

German novelist Martin Walser's new book, "Death of a Critic," has gone straight to the top of the best-seller list, accompanied by furious controversy over the unflattering portrayal of its main character — a Jewish Holocaust sur-

vivor modeled on Germany's best-known literary critic, Marcel Reich-Ranicki.

One of Germany's most respected newspapers, Frankfurt *Allgemeine Zeitung*, called the book a "document of hate" and refused to serialize it.

Walser insists the book is a comedy about the power of critics and the media and is not anti-Semitic, but the author has enraged Jews by saying that the Holocaust is used as "a moral bludgeon" on Germans.

And now some good news

A Jew was on the subway reading a copy of Louis Farrakhan's newspaper. A friend of his, who happened to be riding in the same car, noticed this anomaly.

Very upset, he approached the newspaper reader and said, "Moshe, have you lost your mind? Why are you reading that garbage newspaper?"

Moshe replied: "I used to read the Jewish newspaper, but what did I find? Jews being persecuted, Israel being attacked, Jews disappearing through assimilation and intermarriage, Jews living in poverty. So I switched to Louis Farrakhan's newspaper. Now what do I find? Jews own all the banks, Jews control the media, Jews are all rich and powerful, Jews rule the world. The news is so much better!"

Rona

Continued from page 3

that instead of the Homeland Security Act, what we need is to have people just take the opportunity to read, listen and look at the documentation which is everywhere and available to all of us."

Asked whether a Palestinian State should be created, Carson responded, "The U.S. should monitor fair elections so that the Palestinians have the right to choose who they want to lead them. As Arafat's influence wanes, we can only hope that the new elected leader isn't worse."

She concluded by saying, "I have been so consumed with Israel and the fact that it is the only democracy in the Middle East that I am not up to seeing how a PLO state would fit into the peace process. I can't commit one way or the other right now. But, I am open to my Jewish constituents contacting me with their opinions and any information on how a Palestinian

state would effect Israel and the Jewish people."

At the fifth AIPAC/JCRC gathering, Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., will speak on Thursday, Oct. 24, at the home of Jeffrey Smulyan. An RSVP is requested by contacting Dana Platt at the AIPAC Midwest office (312) 236-8550.

Readers might note that Carson supported the House Foreign Aid and Operations Bill that provided \$3 billion in vital aid for Israel; HR 392 which expressed solidarity with Israel, reaffirmed Israel's right to self-defense, and condemned Palestinian terror and the letter to President Bush urging him to reassess the US relationship with the Palestinians in light of ongoing violence.

Rep. Carson welcomes comments to her by e-mail to juliacarson@mail.house.gov or by postal mail to 300 Fall Creek Pkwy N. Dr #201, Indianapolis, IN, 46205. Her local telephone number is 283-6516.

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Jewish Post & Opinion

Locals have the reins

As our national Jewish organizations have lost their control and no longer dominate the American Jewish community who will replace them?

The answer, probably, is no one.

Local Jewish communities seem to have taken over and local Jewish communities are unlikely ever again to yield control. And that is all to the good.

Our local Jewish communities have all the potential leadership required to divine their needs and activities required to fulfill them. After all, who is better advised as to what requirements are necessary to fulfill their Jewish needs?

This revolution in the control of the American Jewish community has long been overdue.

It displaces no national Jewish leadership for they lost any local control they might have earned on the local level as their organizations have only limited local support these days, whether the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith or the Zionist Organization of America.

The only way to fill the void is for the local Jewish community to begin to assert itself and that is precisely what is happening.

They'll destroy, but Israel will survive

Although suicide bombers seem to have won the day as a cruel Arab tactic against innocent Israelis this deadly tactic also will fall into the limbo of ungodly acts and lose to a great extent their shocking question of whether Israel is a Jewish nation now and forever.

Israeli Arabs will search for new deadly devices to upend the Jewish state and will find them. But in each case they will only be effective temporarily and in the long run will not make a difference.

In fact that situation may just about to be aborning and Israeli Arabs will have lost their last deadly challenge to Israeli control.

Disgruntled Israel Arabs there will always be but their challenge to Israeli control no longer exists.

Make it an obligation

We are waiting for the first congregation to propose to its membership that attendance at one Sabbath service a month is their obligation.

Every member will accept the obligation, minimum that it is, and Sabbath services at the congregation will be, if not crowded, at least, substantially full.

Whether the one service a month will lead to attendance on more frequent Sabbaths cannot be known but the chances are that it will.

What seems to be overlooked is the fact that Sabbath services are most fulfilling as they bring observers into a world that they had not realized Sabbath was all about.

Rabbi faces sex charges

OKLAHOMA CITY — Rabbi Richard M.E. Marcovitz, 65, must face trial here on 11 criminal sex charges. He is accused of groping two girls and two young women at the Oklahoma City Jewish Day School.

Marcovitz served as rabbi of B'nai Israel for 20 years.

Editor's Chair

Two bus systems

The latest tragedy in Israel, in which 14 bus riders were killed in a bombing, could lead to several new decisions by Israel, although every Israeli leader should by now have exhausted his list of potential reactions in the present con-

tinuing slaughter.

Perhaps a split in the bus system, whereby Arabs and Jews ride different buses, could be an answer. Perhaps not, but a way to end the slaughter hopefully can and must be found.

Ghetto fighter urges Arabs to end their attacks

ROME — The last surviving leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Marek Edelman, has called on Palestinians to halt their attacks on Israeli civilians and start talks with Israeli leaders.

Edelman made the proposal in an open letter in a Polish newspaper. But some Jews complained never used the word "terrorism."

He also appears to evoke comparisons between today's Palestinian gunmen and the outnumbered Warsaw Ghetto fighters who mostly died fighting the Nazis in 1943.

"There is no need for such a comparison," Pnina Frymer-Greenspan, who

fought under Edelman in Warsaw, told the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

She did, however, back Edelman's call for negotiations.

Edelman, 81, addressed his letter not to Palestinian politicians, but "to all the commanders of Palestinian military, paramilitary and guerrilla organizations; to all the soldiers in Palestinian combatant organizations."

He said urban guerrillas have never been victorious anywhere in the world, but neither have the armies against which they fought ever won.

"The war you are fighting will also lead to nowhere," he wrote.

Arafat rival promotes truce

JERUSALEM — A Palestinian who plans to run against Yasser Arafat in presidential elections has called for a six-month pause in the intifada.

Hossam Nazal told the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot, "We have to present a positive move. I am calling for a unilateral suspension of the

intifada."

Nazal, 41 told the paper by telephone from Amman that the current Palestinian administration headed by the 73-year-old Arafat was a "fiasco."

He has recommended scrapping the name "Palestinian Authority" arguing that it reflects a "dictatorial rule."

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10. Don't advertise. Forget that you have to keep reminding your established customers that you appreciate their business.

You decide... it's your business in good times or bad.

Ashrawi invitation deplored by senator

DENVER — A Colorado state senator has expressed shock that Colorado College has invited Hanan Ashrawi to keynote a three-day conference commemorating September 11, 2001.

Sen. John Andrews, minority leader of the state Senate, said "to honor her as the keynoter is a slap in the face not only to Jews and friends of Is-

rael, but really to all Americans who object to (and are endangered by) Islamic terrorism."

He said the college at Colorado Springs has a right to exercise its academic freedom, "grotesque as it is."

But he said the choice of the Palestinian Authority official as a keynoter should be vigorously protested.

Grants from Jewish sources announced

NEW YORK — A number of large grants from Jewish sources have been announced, including one for \$1.2 million to Portland State University by Jordan D. Schnitzer of Portland. Other large grants include one for \$5 million by Bernard L. Schwartz of New York and his wife to Bernard Baruch College.

Another substantial gift for \$1 million has been made by Denise R. Stern and her hus-

band, Thomas D. Stern, to the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation of Miami. Also, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Los Angeles has received a gift of \$1 million from actor Leonard Nimoy and his wife, Susan Bay Nimoy.

Ed Shapiro, a retired economics professor at the University of Toledo, has contributed \$1 million to the university to endow a scholarship fund for economics students.

High Holiday services fee no longer charged

DENVER — Tickets for High Holiday services at Temple Emanuel here formerly sold for \$200, but now the congregation will no longer charge non-members for attendance at High Holiday services. Seating will be made available in the social hall plus in the sanctuary, if

there is seating left over after all of the members have arrived.

Executive Administrator Jznet Brontisky said, "We don't want people to have to pay to pray."

The change came in the wake of a 10% dues increase for members.

Goodman signs contract with Maccabi Tel Aviv

BALTIMORE — The one Jewish basketball player who has won the admiration of the American Jewish community, Tamir Goodman, will be displaying his unique abilities before the basketball fans of Israel, as he has signed a three-year contract with Maccabi Tel Aviv.

The deal fits with his

Orthodoxy, since in Israel he will not be required to play on the Sabbath.

Goodman, a 6-foot-3 guard, won media attention as a Baltimore Talmudical Academy junior and had originally planned to compete for the University of Maryland until there was the question of his playing on the Sabbath.

Close to the Tiger; Flesch is in the money

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Steve Flesch didn't win the Buick Open here but finished only six strokes behind

the winner to take home \$79,200 for his three days of competition. Tiger Woods won the tournament.

Daniel Pearl is laid to rest

LOS ANGELES — Private services were held here for Daniel Pearl as his father recited the kaddish. In a prepared statement the family noted that "we finally laid to rest our beloved son, husband, brother

and father in his hometown."

Pearl was the Wall Street Journal foreign correspondent slain by pro-Al Qaeda terrorists in Pakistan, who videotaped the murder they committed.

Rabbi Waxman is being mourned

GREAT NECK, N.Y. — Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, past president of the Rabbinical Assembly, is being mourned.

Ordained in 1941 he served as chaplain in World War II and assumed the pulpit of Temple Israel here in 1947.

He was editor of Conservative Judaism and author of "Tradition and Change."

He was president of the Synagogue Council of America.



FINAL SALUTES—Soldiers honor slain IDF friends in an Israeli cemetery.

Email us at:

jpost@jewishpostopinion.com

Media Watch

TV series digs themes shallowly

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Almost from the outset, HBO's *Six Feet Under*, the brainchild of Alan Ball (writer of "American Beauty") won ac-



colades as "quality TV."

It is now raking in the Emmy nominations. The series has a small town feel, and is the story of a family funeral business. The episodes usually begin with a death that plays some role in the plot line, whether major or minor.

The series is reminiscent of David E. Kelley's *Picket Fences*, but without the social consciousness or the wry, sometimes, pixyish sense of humor, or the continuing, provocative Jewish character. If there is humor in *Six Feet Under* then it definitely revolves around sexual themes of "relationship," desire, unrequited love, "alternative" sexuality, etc., etc., at least in the three or four episodes I have seen.

Picket Fences was more suitable for family viewing, at least most of the time, and far more cerebral.

Six Feet Under has a certain emotional appeal, however, in that the main characters, all of them, are always carrying the sympathy card. The producers and writers want us to feel for them no matter what they do or say.

Like *Picket Fences*, *Six Feet Under* purports to deal with religious themes. But whereas *Picket Fences* always held religion up to the scrutiny of courts and rational evaluation, *Six Feet Under* has, at least so far, shown no such grounding. It has spiraled into New Age "spirituality" and terminology.

What is interesting, for our purposes, is that the mouthpiece for New Age notions has become a woman rabbi who appeared in two episodes well in the spring of the second season (2002). We are introduced to her in an episode about a Jewish funeral, written by Jill Soloway.

The victim of the week happens to be one Jeffrey Marc Shapiro, an attorney, who as-

phyxiates himself by hanging while returning home in the middle of a work day to watch a pornographic video. (Here is a prime example of the "sex humor" of the series.) Later, we

morial Prayer, but for the dead in general, without the name of the deceased. (This appears to be a neglected editorial detail rather than a liturgical disparagement of the way Jeffrey

Like Picket Fences, Six Feet Under purports to deal with religious themes. But whereas Picket Fences always held religion up to the scrutiny of courts and rational evaluation, Six Feet Under has, at least so far, shown no such grounding.

learn that the father of three was indulging in autoerotic asphyxiation and could have saved himself if he had bitten a lemon. (Here is more information than anyone needs to know.)

Apparently, our Jewish lawyer was more interested in seeking such "thrills" than in following his wife's game plan, itself rather opportunistic.

The attorney's widow tells the rabbi and Nate (Peter Krause) and David (Michael C. Hall) Fisher, the two brothers who run the funeral home, that while she was at a jamboree with her 4-year-old, "my husband, Jeff Shapiro, who worked for the third best law firm in L.A., and was three months from making partner, came home on his lunchbreak and hung [sic] himself with his peds around his ankles in our...sunroom." The widow tells the rabbi, in strong, disrespectful and (understandably) angry language, that this can be her eulogy "and can you say that in Hebrew?" It is not a pretty epitaph.

Right off, the rabbi explains to the funeral directors, who, apparently, have never done a Jewish funeral (though they are reluctant to admit it), that "Jewish Law says we have to bury him tomorrow." She adds that it was decided not to have the funeral at the temple "because of the way Jeffrey died." (I gave credit to the congregation for integrity, and to the writer for noting it, as funerals in the synagogue are indeed supposed to be honorific.)

The funeral ceremony merits a close look. The rabbi wears a small tallit (prayer shawl) — not required by tradition — as if to announce her clergy status. The cantor sings the Me-

Marc died.)

The casket is a plain pine box, a nice television plug for simplicity in Jewish funerals, which is in keeping with religious law and custom. And the rabbi subtly, but knowingly, cites from the Talmud in such a way as to censure suicidal tendencies (even of the erotic kind) without castigating the deceased and thus upsetting the family: "Better one day in this life," she quotes, "than all eternity in the World to Come." (Compare the paraphrase in the script with the actual, enigmatic quotation from Pirke Avot 4:22: "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the World to Come; and better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the World to Come than the whole life of this world.")

Interestingly, however, most of the "Jewish" dialogue in the episode is not given to comfort of the widow, but of the funeral director, Nate, who has questions of his own, for he has just been diagnosed with a debilitating disease and is reluctant to tell even his fiancée about it. At the cemetery, he makes a point of asking the rabbi questions about death. She responds with the stock saying, on and off screen, that Jews answer questions with questions.

It is refreshing, however, to see that she does not continue to slough off the question with joking (as often happens with TV rabbis) but responds honestly, "I don't know what the Jewish answer is. I know what I try to do. I try to live my life every day, in a way that honors God."

It is a nice response. Nate replies that he is not certain

Obituaries

Gerald Gunther was mentor to judges

STANFORD, Ca.— Gerald Gunther, a teacher and mentor of judges, one of whom made it to the Supreme Court—Ruth Bader Ginsburg—died at his home here at the age of 75. He had served on the faculty of Stanford Law School since 1962, and his book, *Constitutional Law*, is standard text in most of America's law

schools.

Gunther was a clerk for Chief Justice Earl Warren, about whom he wrote an 818-page biography.

He joined the Columbia Law School faculty and later moved to the Stanford Law faculty where he became William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law in 1972.

Harold Samuels was scholar of American art

FALMOUTH, Mass.— Harold Samuels, self-taught scholar of American art, died at the age of 85. With his wife, Peggy, he wrote or

edited 10 books on art and history.

Samuels graduated from Ohio University before heading to Harvard Law School.

that he believes in God, and the rabbi suggests that "maybe it's time to find Him." Nate teases, "Maybe God's a woman." The rabbi responds, "Maybe," in good humor. But the viewer wonders here and in other scenes whether Nate's teasing, like his attentiveness, may be a form of flirting with the attractive rabbi.

The rabbi's last words at the cemetery are a bit strange, but appear to be the result of her own theological speculations rather than of distraction by Nate's gallantries. "It's considered a great mitzvah, kindness, love for its own sake, to watch people get buried," she says. "Some people call that God." It's clear, by the way, that she doesn't mean that burial is God or watching burial is God. Rather, she appears to be defining God as "love for its own sake" and maybe as "kindness," too.

Actually, it is not watching the burial which is regarded as the "truest possible act of kindness," but personally participating in the burial, in the placing of the earth. But the rabbi and the writer obviously try to put their hearts in the right place when it comes to depicting Judaism.

But are their hearts in the right place?

They seem, at one point, to put Jewish funeral practices on a par with vestigial Hippie rituals presided by an aunt visited by Nate's younger sis-

ter. And the shiva does degenerate into the way Jewish rituals are depicted in most TV series: as fodder or setting for standup comedy! Someone is actually telling a joke about not having had sex since "September 11, 1985." Note the "sex humor" combined with dark humor about September 11. This bizarre interlude is rationalized by the disclaimer, put in the rabbi's mouth, that "Jeffrey represented a lot of comedians."

At the shiva the rabbi feels she has to remind Nate that they can never "go out" because he's not Jewish, but she does add that she has "a bit of a messiah complex" that might prod her to go out with him because of his illness. The rabbi becomes agitated when Nate tells her that he's not sure whether his fiancée is his soul mate. She challenges: "She's not your soul mate but you're going to marry her because you have nothing better to do? Great. That sounds good."

Not only does the rabbi presume, as a "professional," to question the marriage, but she does so in defense of the "sanctity" of the concept of soul mates. She actually defines the term, "soul mate" for Nate: "The person who makes you be the most you that you could possibly be. Maybe your soul mate is the person who forces your soul to grow the most. Not all growth feels good."

Continued on page 12

As I Heard It

Klezmer depended on shul-skipppers

By MORTON GOLD

Under the heading of old business, when I reviewed two



cassettes featuring the late Cantor Saul Meisels recently, I wrote that I did not know where one could purchase these wonderful cassettes, which are wonderful examples of Jewish musical art—wonderful with regard to content as well as with regard to performance. I even made the gaffe of referring to the Temple-On-The-Heights as the one on the Hill! (Oy!) My apologies.

One may—should—purchase Secunda's "Sabbath Eve Service" as well as the Friday evening *Zmiers*, which features the late cantor Saul Meisels, from his widow: Mrs. Ida Meisels, 2500 NE 135th St., Apt. 111, N. Miami, Fla. 33181. The cost per cassette is \$10, with \$2 (each) for mailing. I would only add that each is a bargain.

I have recently received not one, but two, books of Jewish musical interest. This is interesting because, for the most part, I have used this column to describe various CDs of Jewish musical interest.

The book I shall comment on this week is *The Book of Klezmer: The History, The Music, The Folklore from the 14th Century to the 21st*, by Yale Strom, published by A Cappella Books, August 2002. This is an intriguing as well as interesting book in many respects.

Among the facts I did not know is that many of the musicians that came to Klezmer music, at least from this country, did so over the objections of their parents. Another is that most came from non-observant families.

In the United States we have the perception that Klezmer is authentic Jewish music. Jews of Sephardic heritage would rightfully take exception to this. In the same way of thinking, Hassidic music has

made its way into our services. I seem to have gone on a tangent recently on the state of disrepair of music in our synagogues and temples.

The office of hazzan is rap-

diaspora, of those who do not or have not had land. Those who are not religiously observant are drawn to it as a matter of nostalgia, as it has become a kind of substitute for

Those of you who are on the boards of operas, symphonies, art museums, and so on, where is your voice? If you ever attend services, surely you could not admire what you hear. (Perhaps this is the reason you don't attend!)

idly disappearing. It is more of a closet, if that. I recently chided a visitor who was boisterously "singing" during the readers' repetition of the Amidah. THAT is for the hazzan to sing. He obviously thought otherwise and is probably not alone. Very little, if anything, is left for the hazzan.

Hassidic and Hassidic-sounding tunes, along with sentimental drivel, are heard with increasing frequency. Those who now lead services, rabbis included, are non-daveners. Their abilities as cantors run the gamut from inept to incompetent.

The High Holidays are coming. Will you hear compositions by such as Low, Jassinowski, Dunajewski, or classics by Naumbourg, Sulzer or Lewandowski (all for cantor, choir and organ) or recitatives by such as Katcho, Gantchoff, or Kwartin sung by your cantor (if you still have one that is).

I write all of this not because I do not like Klezmer music. On the contrary, I do. However, for me, it is dessert, not the main dish. An occasional Hassidic tune may surely not be out of place, particularly when the service has been devoted to the best of our creators of music-of-worth for the synagogue.

Those of you who are on the boards of operas, symphonies, art museums, and so on, where is your voice? If you ever attend services, surely you could not admire what you hear. (Perhaps this is the reason you don't attend!)

In Israel, as the author points out, Klezmer music is regarded as music of the

identification with things Jewish. I realize that I have indeed digressed, but I have become increasingly irate, not only by what I hear, but what I see in the synagogue.

On page 251 the author writes: "Though the balet-Kulturiks have basically the same DNA as their brethren in Israel, for many it is difficult to relate to Israeli culture—particularly Israeli music." And on page 252: "Consequently for them, their Jewish cultural sensibilities and nostalgia memory devices are European, not Middle Eastern."

This then may well be the reason that, particularly in Reconstructionist and Reform temples, one hears hassidic-style tunes which are essentially European in character, even some original ones by such as Rav Schlomo Carlebach. Thus, it's not only Jews for Jesus who adopt the trappings of Judaism to convey the impression that they are authentic.

In Reconstructionist and Reform temples, one would think that we are all Hassidim on the basis of the quantity of Hassidic tunes sung there. There is nothing at all amiss for the Hassidim to sing their ay, ay, ays, to stomp their feet, dance, and even clap their hands. That is their genuine manner of singing to G-d and also to and for themselves. There is nothing that is self-conscious about the same approach to music in the black Southern Baptist churches, where much the same thing is done. That is their way of singing and of praying.

In many Reconstructionist

and Reform temples, in my opinion, the use of Hassidic music is merely an affectation, as Jewish as the ones for Yoshke and as phony as a three-dollar bill. No Hassid would be caught dead in either place.

And, folks, if you think that all is well in most Conservative and Orthodox shuls, you've got another guess coming! They will be the subject of a future column.

If the founders of the Reform movement who were of German heritage could hear what is presently sung in their temples, they would be outraged. Anything that brings people into the temple is viewed as being good, right and proper. The catchword seems to be "congregational participation."

Have you noticed that rabbis are no longer giving prepared sermons. They now lead discussions instead! (My son, the rabbi, the panel moderator!) Heck, if they really want to have the temples filled (especially by guys) they should have scantily clad female danc-

ers cavorting down the aisles when the Torah is taken from the ark!

The party line, even the mantra, in our local shul is "Change is good." I am not entirely convinced by this attitude. Competence and taste are more important, it seems to me. Change is only good when it is for the better.

Okay, I have not really discussed *The Book of Klezmer*. It contains a wealth of information and a precious glossary with the sources of each word given. Speaking of sources, this may ultimately be the most valuable part of this book. The use of Klezmer musicians as the source of works of Jewish literature, for example, is discussed on pages 127-128.

In brief, while this book may not be the last word on the subject of Klezmer music, until that last word appears, this will be regarded as a timely, scholarly, as well as readable work. Highly recommended.

Dr. Gold may be reached at 12 Avenue B, Rutland, Vermont 05701-4503, or by e-mail at: drmortongold@juno.com.

About Books

Fall books examine feminism, mysticism

By JACK FISCHEL

Jason Aronson recently announced the titles of new books that will be published



this fall. They include *A Woman's Voice: Biblical Women—Divine Wisdom Transformed into Action for Today's Woman*, by Marcella Bakur Weiner and Blema Feinstein (\$30).

Kabbalistic Writings on the Nature of Masculine and Feminine, by Sarah Schneider provides annotated translations of

Kabbalistic texts. The author studied with Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, a noted teacher of Chassidut and Kabbalah. (\$40).

Kabbalah: The Splendor of Judaism, is by David Wexelman, founder of the Jerusalem Clinic for the Mentally Ill, and assistant director of the School of Kabbalah of Chaim Vital (\$35).

Legends of Biblical Heroes: A Sourcebook, by Ronald H. Isaacs. The author is the chairperson of the publications committee of the Rabbinical Assembly of America (\$30); *Halakic Positions of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik—Volume II*, by Aharon Ziegler (\$30); *Rabbi Saadiah Gaon's Commentary on the Book of Creation*, annotated and translated by Michael Linetsky (\$40);

Tolerance, Dissent and Democracy Philosophical, Historical Continued on page 6

Israel: As I See It

Muslims and infidels at war!

By SAMSON KRUPNICK

We have been fighting terrorists for over a century, even before the creation of the State of Israel 54 years ago. Our Israel Defense Force and



security agencies, with the able assistance of an expert intelligence, have dealt with these continuing attacks by helicopter pinpoint missile targeting of terror leadership and by destroying arms factories and arms stores.

Counterattacks have been effective, and the degree of terror success has lessened considerably. Nevertheless, the Ariel Sharon unity Government, even under American pressure, refused to discuss presumed peace talks while the Palestine Authority terror groups of Fatah, Tanzim and the Al Aqsa Brigade were conducting organized terror for an intifada period of almost two years.

President Bush presented a proposal of the Tenet Committee to arrive at a cease-fire, followed by the Mitchell Plan, which could negotiate a peace arrangement, to no avail. Yasser Arafat and his makeshift Palestine Authority did not want peace. They had an offer orchestrated by "villain" Shimon Peres, accepted by former prime minister Ehud Barak and by President Clinton, wherein virtually all of Judea and Samaria would be surrendered to Arafat.

He and his Palestine Authority turned it down, to the chagrin of Clinton and Barak, who was desperate to present a plan to the electorate. Arafat and his Tunis-trained Palestine Authority did not want peace with Israel, not then and not now. Their aim was then and remains now and forever the destruction of the State of Israel.

In this spirit, Arafat launched his intifada in September 2000 with the sole aim of killing as many Jewish civilians in Israel as possible — women and children preferred. Despite American efforts, the intifada continued,

aided by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah terrorist organizations, and abetted and supported by Muslims in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq.

Arafat received sophisticated arms and missiles, as

of all the terror organizations, including that of the so-called Palestine Authority. There apparently is no issue of settlements or boundaries. We don't belong here in the Middle East. This is sacred Muslim land and we are in-

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., requested action against Saudi Arabia for its assistance in terror attacks in Israel. The IDF immediately reacted by destroying nine homes of suicide attackers, at long last acting on our recommendation to destroy the homes of suicide attackers, arresting those who assisted the attacker and exiling the rest. We hope such reprisals will discourage terror.

The increasing support by Muslims against Israel is a development that not only endangers Israel but becomes a jihad (holy war) against Jews, Christians, and all "infidels" and non-believers in Islam. Expert Prof. Samuel Huntington of Harvard University wrote: "We are in an age of Muslim war that is developing into a clash of civilizations."

did the other terrorists. After some 10 years of extreme hatred for Jews as part of student training, suicide volunteers were plenty, especially when \$25,000 was supplied to each of the families. In this period of intifada, Israel suffered some 650 casualties and over 1,500 wounded in numerous attacks throughout the country, particularly in this previous weekend, with 35 killed and 150 wounded.

This catastrophe occurred despite the occupation by the IDF of the Arab cities and apart from the success of the IDF in intercepting more than 140 suicide terror attempts. Apparently, Israel has become a testing ground for a Muslim battle against chief infidels Jews and Israel.

A Hamas leader interviewed by foreign correspondents declared: "We shall continue our attacks until the last Israeli leaves this land." This is precisely the objective

terlopers.

President Bush was "distressed" at these terror attacks and called upon all countries to fight terror, particularly those in Israel, but still hoped for peace. Apparently, he despaired of the "vision" of two states living side by side in peace and tranquility.

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for the council.

In any case, violence must cease before all else. Full attention must be given by Israel and by the United States to the new Muslim war threat spreading worldwide and endangering our civilization. We pray for a Heavenly solution.

Samson Krupnick may be reached at 22 Pinsker, Jerusalem 92228, Israel. E-mail: krup@barak-online.net.

FISCHEL

Continued from page 5

and Halakchic Perspectives, Moshe Sokol, ed. Rabbi Robert Hirt, series, ed.; *Let My People Go: Insights to Passover and the Haggadah*, by Jeffrey M. Cohen. The author has published 14 books and more than 300 articles. He is currently the rabbi of the Stanmore Synagogue in London, England (\$25).

The Quest for the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel: To the Ends of the Earth, by Rivka Gonen (\$30); *The Reluctant Messiah: An Historical Novel*, by Salomon Eskinazi. The novel is based on the historical accounts of the life of Sabbatai Sevi, the 17th century false-Messiah (\$30).

How to have Fun without Getting into Trouble, by Simcha Feuerman and Chaya Feuerman. The volume deals with the many complex issues that modern Jews face today. The essays are drawn from the authors' experiences as religious Jews, parents and psychotherapists. (\$30).

It's Arlene Peck!

Beyond grief

By ARLENE PECK

It's beyond grief, or even rationale. I'm beginning to sound like a nut when I attack well-meaning strangers about the murders and waste of life



from these subhuman animals.

How does one even comprehend the lack of soul that can dance in the street while passing out candies to celebrate the murder of students at Hebrew University?

The recent cafeteria bombing at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, in which at least seven people were killed and dozens injured, should dispel any lingering illusions. Unless one is totally dense or blinded by their anti-Semitism, the real goal of the Palestinians couldn't be more obvious.

Watching those murderers dancing in the streets and laughing about the deaths of the students has got to dispel any lingering doubts the leftists might have had. The Arabs don't want anything that resembles peace. They want their Palestinian State to be built on the ruins of the Jewish State.

Truly, it's beyond comprehension that Hamas gives press conferences after the carnage at Hebrew University to say, "The Jews should leave Israel and return to where they came from." These people are so primitive and brainwashed that nobody has ever told them that the Israeli Jews not only have the deed to the land but also have been living there for thousands of years.

Wouldn't matter anyway. Not only are their minds evil, their culture is 9th century. The only thing they understand is power. We wouldn't sit down with bin Laden and negotiate with him. The United States would destroy him.

These murderers have to be taught unequivocally that their killing machines will not be able to operate. Political solutions are out of the question, as the Arabs have never kept their word in any agreement that they've signed. It's

"give an inch and demand a mile."

Recently I had the chance to discuss this situation with

streets at each new bombing do not, cannot, live in harmony with the 21st century.

Transfers have been done in

With the mindset they have, I doubt if they use their universities for anything other than bomb-making. I wonder how they would react if a plane or two went over theirs and a bomb was dropped? Or, how about making the announcement that for every bomb that is dropped on our citizens, we intend to take back ten percent of our country. And, then do it!

Dr. Daniel Pipes, who not only agreed with this, but thought that a framework for any peace could come only after the Palestinians had been defeated militarily.

Negotiation is not the answer. Transfer is something that must be given more thought than has ever been given. They are a cancer within the country whose sole purpose in life is the death of the Jews. This is unacceptable. Cancers must be cut out!

Those that live in Israel cannot be forced to live every day waiting for the other shoe to drop. Nor can they live playing Russian roulette every day to see where the next bomb will fall.

They had their chance for the Palestinian state two years ago but walked away from it because it wasn't enough. They want Israel. They want world domination. We are fighting it, and Israel can do less.

Their Arab brothers have 100 times more land than they are fighting for. It is not, nor has it ever been, their country as claimed. As I have written before, Israel is a test. If each new scene of atrocity is allowed to stand, then they will become stronger in their evil madness.

Their Arab brothers have trained them in barbarism. Now they are reaping the fruit of their efforts. These robots that parade and dance in the

Misconceptions

We welcome thoughtful converts

By RABBI REUVEN BULKA

Misconception: Conversion is discouraged, because Judaism does not welcome converts.

It is the general procedure



for a rabbi meeting a prospective convert to use various means of discouraging the convert.

Generations ago, the conversion process did not take more than an hour or so; it was condensed into a short period of time. Because it was condensed, the "discouraging" was less than subtle.

In the contemporary situation, the conversion procedure takes significantly longer, and one need not discourage the convert three times at the first meeting.

Additionally, the reason for discouraging the convert must be more fully appreciated. Judaism does not discourage converts, but it also does not seek to find them. Judaism has never espoused the belief that righteous individuals who are not Jewish are therefore denied

a claim to eternal life. No one is condemned for not being Jewish.

Therefore, there is no desire to force individuals to accept Judaism, as if that is the only way to salvation. The Judaic accent is on universal righteousness.

However, if one sincerely wants to join the ranks of the Jewish community, then the Jewish community's reaction should be one of delight at the prospect, assuming that the reason for joining is not suspect. For the conversion to be meaningful, the convert must be apprised of all the dangers and pitfalls associated with being Jewish. A convert who is simply ushered along in a facile manner without being made aware of the potential problems of converting, enters the Jewish fold with blinders on, and may be heading for a rude awakening later on.

Rather than subjecting the would-be convert to this possibly devastating experience, we insist on discouraging the convert. This discouragement forces the convert to take a more sober look at the situation. If, in spite of the discouragement, the convert still pushes forward, we can at least be more confident that the convert is making this significant change fully aware of its implications.

Continued on page 12

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How Denver women forged leadership

By SANDY KAMINSKY

Those of you who know me know that my involvement with BMH-BJ is fairly recent. As a child our family was very involved with a traditional synagogue in Sacramento, CA, and so my background has been in a setting similar to BMH-BJ. I became involved with the shul as the result of our traveling with Rabbi Wagner for the last 3 years on the Jewish Heritage trips and becoming acquainted with Renee Wagner.

When Renee first approached me, almost a year ago, about participating in the new Women's Issues Committee which she wanted to form, her desire was the development and implementation of a program for the synagogue that would encourage greater participation by women in the leadership and organization of the shul.

While I thought the idea attractive in theory I felt it would be challenging to actually implement given the general difficulty synagogues have in attracting and retaining qualified leaders and the frequent reticence of many women to assume leadership roles in a traditional synagogue coupled with the resistance women encounter. In fact, the reality so far has been just the opposite of my expectations.

There are two key elements to developing leadership—one is to make certain that people have the skills essential to effective leadership and the second is to provide meaningful opportunities to utilize those skills, in other words, access. Myndie Brown and I, with the support of The Women's Issues Committee, principally Marlin Barad and Renee Wagner, and a subcommittee Myndie and I formed, set about trying to develop a program that we named the Women's Leadership Institute that would provide both the skills and the access. We found within our community a well-established facilitator and trainer, Susan Spero, who enthusiastically agreed to act as the organizer and leader of the Institute.

With her help we identified the primary areas we wanted addressed in a leadership program geared toward women leaders and developed what we hope will ensure a strong, qualified core of women who can begin assuming meaningful leadership roles within the synagogue organization. At each step of the way we worked with Danny, the immediate past president of the congregation, Rob, our current president, and David, the next president to assure that they supported our plans and would work with us and the leadership participants to maximize opportunities. In addition, we consulted with Rabbi Wagner to be certain that our goals and objectives were within halachic guidelines.

Since no funds were available in the synagogue budget to fund such a program, the subcommittee we formed solicited individual contributions from women in the shul who felt that this idea was important enough to merit their support. We were fortunate to obtain contributions sufficient to underwrite the entire cost of the first part of the Women's Leadership Institute and we will again seek individual contributions for the remainder of the Institute, which extends through the upcoming fiscal year.

After much discussion we decided that in order to maximize its effectiveness as a participatory and interactive program the Leadership Institute had to be limited to 20-25 participants. The subcommittee developed a list of women who were existing leaders or whom we felt possessed leadership potential, either as a result of prior involvement in activities or through personal knowledge that someone had of these women. Since we were uncertain about the response of the women who we planned to approach we developed a list of 80 women whom we would contact. To our surprise, and extreme pleasure, we received almost a 100 percent positive response for those contacted to participate. As a result we ended up contacting only about 30 women to participate in the initial Institute. Of these women almost 20 ended up participating in many, if not all, of the initial sessions. Some of these women had already undertaken leadership roles on various committees or on the board, but many of them were younger women who were just beginning to get involved. In all instances it was agreed that the benefit to be obtained from the skills that would be covered by the institute would be helpful.

With the support of the Women's Issues Committee and the syna-

gogue leadership we developed a two-part program, the first of which we completed in early June and the second part of which extend throughout next year. During the first part of the Women's Leadership Institute the participants attended 6 2 1/2-hour sessions covering communication, relationship management skills, shul structure and culture, leadership vs management, fiscal responsibility (understanding and navigating balance sheets and budgets) and leading effective meetings. In addition, we held a 7th session with Rabbi Cohen, where we discussed the role of women in Modern Orthodoxy and important women in the Bible. Some sessions were led by Susan and others involved qualified professionals in the subject area.

After completion of the initial sessions each participant was placed on one or more committees in which she had expressed an interest (or on the board). The placement of the participants was coordinated with the synagogue leadership. Each institute participant has been paired with a mentor (who attended a separate training session with Susan). The program participant and her mentor will maintain contact throughout the upcoming year and will jointly attend an additional three sessions that will be oriented toward problem solving and dealing with issues and situations that come up during their participation on their committees. The goal of both the initial sessions and the follow up sessions is to provide the institute participants with both the skills and practical knowledge they need to become effective leaders for our synagogue, or, for those who have already been involved, to improve their effectiveness.

Now, to the question why women? It has been established that women go about assuming leadership differently than men. Understanding these differences and providing effective training and opportunities is frequently the key to attracting women leaders. Marianne Schmid Mast, a PhD psychologist and researcher at Northeastern University in Boston has said that "men tend to enter a room and dominate whereas women gather their power slowly and carefully." In developing the curriculum of the Women's Leadership Institute we approached the various skills that would be covered using this knowledge about the different ways in which women assume leadership. For women the personal relationship is frequently a key to establishing effectiveness and helps them "tune into others' goals." Keeping this in mind a part of each session was spent providing skills and practical experience in effective methods of improving personal relationships between committee members and the participants of the program. Since some women may be slower to assume responsibility or authority, the positive aspects of this behavior were identified, and again methods and techniques were shared to turn it into an advantage. The message throughout the sessions was clear, by learning and practicing the skills essential to leadership all the participants would be able to assume meaningful roles in the synagogue in the future.

Many people who learned of our plans and the details of the Women's Leadership Institute indicated that it should be offered on a broader basis to both men and women in the congregation. We agree, all of our leadership, both experienced and new can benefit from the skills and practical information learned during the institute. Hopefully, in the future, there will be opportunities for such a program. However, for the present, thanks to the efforts of the Women's Issues Committee and those who financially underwrote the Women's Leadership Institute, we have a core of women in our congregation who have not only expressed an interest in assuming leadership positions, but have made the commitment in terms of their time and efforts to acquire the core skills necessary to become effective leaders.

Continued on page 10

Digest of the Yiddish Press

Canada honors Yiddishists

By RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

The government of Canada does something which other nations don't do. It honors those who have promoted the spread of Yiddish. The govern-



ment bestows a special decoration upon people who have contributed to culture. The decoration is called the Order of Canada.

Recently one of the honorees was Sarah Rosenfeld, of Montreal. A leader of the Canadian Jewish Congress, she has organized Yiddish festivals and has edited publications for the Workman's Circle. Her smiling countenance graces a page in the *Forward*.

'Americane' winning

Shickel Fishman, of Los Angeles, a leader of the League for Yiddish, offers some observations in the *Forward* not about Yiddish, but about English. His essay describes the victory of American English over British English. For a long time the British looked down on "Americane."

Early in American history Noah Webster, the lexicographer, contended that in the United States we should celebrate our version of English. He was ignored. But recently even British writers and linguists are recognizing the distinctive features of "Americane." He calls his piece "The British Defeat." For some reason he calls Webster "Nora."

Were they snobs?

Newspaper editors usually comment on the issues of the day. The editor of the *Algemeiner Journal*, Gerson Jacobsen, does that. But occasionally his observations are of a personal nature.

In a recent editorial he told about the couple that came to request his opinion about a matter that concerned them. Their daughter is dating a *ba'al teshuvah* (one who recently turned from agnosticism toward religious observance). It seems they want to get married, but the couple is reluctant to give their approval because the suitor doesn't have much

yichus (pedigree).

They, on the contrary, have a lot of it. On both sides their families have included rabbis and scholars. What does the editor think?

Jacobsen writes that normally he hesitates to offer a view about something of that order. However, in this case, he

hurts. No sooner did she leave the room when she heard the baby shriek. When she came back, the boy said, "She does now." (Sarah Schechter)

They went west

It was Horace Greeley who said "Go west." Quite a number of Jewish immigrants to the United States did this. Some

Newspaper editors usually comment on the issues of the day. The editor of the Algemeiner Journal, Gerson Jacobsen, does that. But occasionally his observations are of a personal nature.

couldn't restrain himself. So he blurted out, "You are a couple of snobs," and then he turned away. The editor wonders what readers think of his behavior. So does this reviewer.

Jews on Christianity

From time to time Jews, including scholars, embrace Jesus. Both the late Rabbi Stephen Wise and the late Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath were among those who spoke out in that vein. The Yiddish writer Sholom Asch wrote a trilogy on the Christian Holy Family. The late English scholarly aristocrat Claude Montefiore wrote a commentary on the New Testament.

In a recently published biography of Montefiore (1859-1939), Daniel Langdon chronicles the views of Montefiore and also some of his achievements. One of them was to bring scholar Dr. Solomon Schechter to England, which he left in order to become the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the school of Conservative Judaism. Like some other English liberal Jews, he opposed Zionism, believing that Jewry's goal ought to be freedom everywhere rather than reclamation of the Holy Land. (Michael Kritikove, in the *Forward*)

Toddler teaches tot

Humor in the *Forward*: The 5-year-old boy shrieked. When the mother came into the room, she saw that his hair was being yanked by his 2-year-old sister. The mother liberated the boy and explained that the baby doesn't know that it

joined the Gold Rush. One of them, Adolph Stern, helped Sam Houston smuggle guns in his struggle to win Texas from Mexico. Some became cowboys.

In a Los Angeles museum there is currently a display that vivifies "Jewish Life in the West." Included are shots of the 1914 film "The Squaw Man," which featured a Jew who aided the American Indians. Also on view is a shot of Joseph Newmark, founder of the Los Angeles Hebrew Benevolent Society. (*Forward*)

Unchaining

A recent decision by a court in England is a "break" for some Orthodox Jewish women. It ruled that if an Orthodox Jewish couple applies for a civil divorce, it won't be granted unless it is preceded by a religious divorce (*get*). That has to do with the Orthodox law that grants only the husband the right to initiate a *get*. Some nasty husbands, out of spite, refuse to give the wife a *get*, and she is therefore doomed to be an *agunah* (chained). She cannot marry again under Halakha.

If a divorced woman without a *get* decides to marry again, her children, according to Halakha, are illegitimate (*mamzerim*). Some Orthodox women without a *get* believe that children by a second marriage are also illegitimate. The court's ruling won the approval of England's chief rabbi, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, who, like many an Orthodox rabbi, has had to cope with reluctant husbands.

Advice By Edlin

Family frictions: no quick fixes

By RITA EDLIN

Q: My husband and I both come from close families. His folks live in Florida, so we only see them once or twice a year. Still, we feel very close. We see my family more



often, but there are always so many battles. I wish they lived in Florida too. I have a brother and sister, both happily married, and we all have children. I never got along well with my brother, but when he refused to come to my son's bar mitzvah, I felt as if that was the end.

My mother told me he had pitched all of our wedding pictures, just because we forgot his birthday. Not only did he hurt me, but he hurt my parents too, and my sister and her children. He's always finding some reason to be hurt, just like he did when he was 10. But he's 40 now. Will he ever grow up? What goes on in other families? Do grown children have to continue to fight? Is there any way to fix it? Will we ever be able to be close? How can we get along better?

A: He must have been very hurt that no one remembered his birthday. Is there any way you could make up for that?

"Getting along" means something different to everyone. And "feeling close" is different from "getting along." If you and your brother are continuing your childhood fights, you are neither close nor are you getting along. Not only is it painful for both of you, but it splits the rest of the family, too.

Some families, such as your husband's, feel close even though visits are far apart. Others spend more time together but have a more distant relationship. And there's nothing wrong with that, as long as it suits everyone.

The amount of time spent together is not relevant. What is relevant is the feeling of concern, the mutual trust and expectations of everyone involved in what is called a "close relationship." It sounds as if there is a lot of unhappiness between you and your brother, left over from childhood. That might be resolved

in counseling, if you were both willing to try. If not, you might never be able to "feel close" to him and his family.

Does it happen in other families? Of course. But my guess is that doesn't make you feel one bit better. There is often anger, jealousy, competition, and resentment among siblings. And that can go on for a lifetime.

Can it be fixed? Probably not without professional counseling. Then, you might ask, "how can we manage to get along?" To begin with, everyone has to be willing to work on changing his own attitude and behavior. No one should expect profound changes in the character of any other. At family gatherings, old feelings of anger should be suppressed for the few hours the family is together. You could ask each person, ahead of time, to recall a funny or happy event from the past. If you reminisce, make sure it's about something pleasant.

If it helps, you might tape record the conversation and replay it at another time, with each person rating himself on saying positive things. A video camera would work better, if you have one. Keep the conversation light and focused on neutral subjects (movies, sports, world events, fashion, or recipes). And the more humor you can introduce, the better. It might feel forced at first, and there might be an air of tension, but it will get easier as time goes on, and it could change everyone's expectation of what family gatherings should be.

Maybe that's not what you had in mind, but it's better than constant quarreling. And it's better than those families who simply stop talking to one another. That's a loss, especially for the younger generation.

Talk it over with the family and give it a try. If it doesn't seem to be working after six or seven tries, you might take yourselves to a family counselor. That's not a guarantee, but it might lift the angry cloud that seems to be hovering over all of you.

To find a counselor, look in the white pages of your phone book or under "Family Counselors" in the yellow pages. Good luck.

Rita Edlin may be reached at 2412 Ingleside Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45206.

Jews By Choice

Only a few want to 'save' me

By MARY HOFMANN

DEAR Mary/Miriam:

How do people react when they find out you converted to Judaism?



The breadth of responses to discovering my situation as a Jewish convert never ceases to amaze me. The only real constant is that there always is a reaction.

I doubt many Jews are ever surprised. When I'm introduced in a Jewish environment as Mary, I assume most Jews automatically figure I converted. Having grown up in an area populated almost entirely by Jews, I never met another Mary I met until I grew up and moved away.

I even thought, at the outset, of legally changing my name from Mary to Miriam (my Hebrew name, not surprisingly), but I couldn't do it. For one thing, I'd been Mary all my life and family and friends weren't going to change easily. For another, I felt that the conversion was more a stamp of authenticity than a "conversion." I hadn't undergone any fundamental internal changes. Finding a whole group of people whose worldview was compatible with mine was a matter of coming home, not of being altered.

Then, too, my Hebrew name was special to me in a different way — an acknowledgment of the work and the study and the learning of a different kind of practice, and I cherished it as something I'd earned, even risen to. To use Miriam in everyday work and play situations seemed to diminish it.

Not surprisingly then, given my moniker, I don't think any Jew I've met has been truly surprised to discover that I converted. The surprise doesn't come until they find out my husband converted as well.

I suppose this has a rational basis, since the number of conversions probably has a high statistical correlation to intermarriage (or the avoidance thereof). With Jews, then, that second piece of information is

usually what opens the floodgates of curiosity. Why? When? How? Studying under whom? And on and on. And, with few notable exceptions, that curiosity is loving, well-intended, and attended to with fascination and delight.

The reactions of Christians, however, have been quite different. Several conversational characteristics seem to recur in these situations.

It's quite common for them to be so surprised they are rendered speechless for a moment, and the first question — why? — is loaded very differently than when asked by a Jew. This "why?" tends to be one of shock and perplexity, as though they are mentally scrambling with the unthinkable. True, I have rejected the belief system that seems self-evident to them, and that's a very threatening thing indeed.

On the one hand, they almost need to know why at a really visceral level, and on the other, they seem afraid to actually hear why. Their whole belief system is potentially threatened, and they simultaneously want to know the chinks I saw in the armor so they can show me they aren't really there, or they are quaking internally at the possibility that those cracks may be real.

Surprisingly, I've had some very conservative Christian friends accept the situation with relative aplomb. Some born-again Presbyterian friends aren't worried about me at all. Since the Jews are "one of the chosen people," they think our souls (unlike the souls of my Mormon friends) are safe. Baptist friends, however, pray for me continually, as my soul is headed straight for the nether regions unless I repent and come back to the fold (hardly likely after 30 years).

The funniest reactions I've had were with less educated conservative Christians who try to make conversation by pulling in some kind of parallel. I loved the woman I met in an ill-fated sewing class (a skill I long since have abandoned as hopeless), who said, "You're Jewish? I think I heard once that Jesus was Jewish before he became Christian." I could come up with no response to that one besides patting her on the shoulder and agreeing.

One of the advantages of having converted so long ago (and living in a relatively small

How Marriott holds its own

By HAROLD JACOBSON

Seventy-five years after it began as a modest A&W root beer outlet in a Washington D.C. suburb, the Marriott hotel management conglomerate has grown to almost 2,000 hotels worldwide and is the 16th largest business in the United States, with 225,000 employees it calls "associates."

The corporation is also the biggest hotel management company in the world; it boasts 3,500 food service units, the delivery of 1.7 million cases of food products each week, and management of 15,000 senior citizens in retirement communities. Only the U.S. military is bigger.

An analysis of the corporate philosophy represented by Marriott reveals a number of solid management techniques not customarily registered in business success stories. They include the importance of the organization over the individual, the maintenance of employee morale, a sense of humor, a readiness to confess mistakes, the danger of decision paralysis, and the recognition that sometimes one has to cut one's losses and move on.

These sober ideas were not, of course, fully formed when, in 1927 (the same year aviator entrepreneur Charles Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic on the first solo flight), J. W. Marriott Sr. opened his first A&W fast-food facility. Shortly thereafter, in the 1930s, Marriott created the Hot Shoppes restaurant chain.

He immediately began to acquaint his young son with the need for hands-on experience, which included impromptu visits to sites in order to check on hygienic condi-

community) is that the question rarely comes up any more. In my town, I have become more a resource than a curiosity, and I think — at least I hope — I have handled the questions with enough sensitivity and respect that I've grown into a respectable representative of the Jewish people.

(If you wonder . . . about anything related to becoming Jewish, please write and ask me at Mhofurriter@aol.com or at P.O. Box 723, Merced CA 95341).

tions, food preparation, service, and customer satisfaction.

In 1937 Marriott Sr., having observed that passengers boarding Eastern Airlines flights at Washington's Hoover field (the site today of the Pentagon) were purchasing coffee and sandwiches before getting on the plane, invented In-Flite, the first on-flight food service modality, which quickly spread to American and Capital airlines.

During the 1940s, Hot Shoppes became a major catering enterprise, feeding thousands of government employees who were streaming into Washington D.C. to work in defense plants and government complexes.

One of the principles that animated Marriott Sr. was Alfred J. Whitehead's observation that an individual does not know his strengths or weaknesses until he tests them. This was put into practice when Hot Shoppes decided to expand its horizons by opening, in 1957, its first hotel just south of Washington in Arlington, Virginia at a place called Twin Bridges.

The choice of that location was based on the permanence of sites situated near bridges because, while roads and highways could be rerouted, bridges rarely were. Forty-five years later, the location concept is still a factor. For example, the Marriott Harbor Beach facility in Fort Lauderdale, Florida can only be accessed by two drawbridges.

As for guest comfort, management realized that this was going to be a function of employee comfort. Disgruntled kitchen, laundry, and front desk workers, staff personnel, lower and upper management people — they would ultimately make or break the hotel.

One of the first techniques to harmonize employee relations was to use the term "associate" in order to narrow the gap between management and those who worked for them. Now a widely accepted practice used by Wal-Mart and other big companies, the inclusive "associate" name was new in the 1950s and 1960s when Marriott introduced it.

The founder's son, J.W. Marriott Jr., who presided over the exponential growth of the Marriott chain in its 1,500 incar-

nations up until 2000, says that the smooth interaction between guest and staff is more important than the profit line in Marriott thinking.

As an example, he cites the case of a hotel manager in the chain whose ledgers showed significant, even impressive, growth. However, during a monitoring trip to the hotel in question, J.W. noted surly countenances among many of the "associates." He discovered that there was widespread dissatisfaction and anger with the manager's Draconian approach to associate discipline. The result? The manager was let go: staff morale was more important than profits.

Marriott Jr., who logged hundreds of thousands of miles a year checking his firm's properties, notes that emotional problems among associates can be serious enough to inhibit cordial relations with guests. Accordingly, Marriott set up a resource line that provides troubled employees an opportunity to talk to qualified counselors about emotional distress. This practice has defused a lot of potential personnel problems.

The company has also initiated an ingenious reward program for its associates that provides for an original Marriott twist. Guests are asked to identify employees who have been especially helpful. The designated employee is given a commendation, a monetary prize, and a gold star for his/her uniform. Guests are given a beach towel. Then the rewarded employee is asked to name three other associates who have been helpful to him or her. Those employees are then rewarded commensurately.

The major challenges to hit Marriott occurred in the early 1970s and the 1990s. Marriott Sr. had always been opposed to the franchise concept, and he cited specific reasons for his opposition. Howard Johnson, the ice cream and motel concern, had had a fabulous track record while it was owned and operated by its founders. Once the name was franchised, a slow but steady disintegration in its quality control was observed. For Marriott Sr. this was the kiss of death; therefore, Marriott would not enter the franchise concept.

What changed the corporate

GERTEL

Continued from page 4

Odd and unfortunate that the rabbi should become TV's latest mouthpiece for New Age "soul mate" platitudes.

After all, the Zohar and other classics of Jewish mysticism warn against the throwing aside of one's wedded (or betrothed) partner in favor of actual mated souls from past lives. The emphasis in the mainstream of Jewish mysticism is on honoring the sacred covenants of this life. Those who embraced belief in reincarnation had faith that destined souls would find one another more quickly in some life if they practiced kindness and compassion and loyalty in the lives in between.

It seems that Nate met his attractive and witty fiancée, Brenda Chenowith (Rachel Griffiths), on a plane. They have talked marriage, though both have had qualms and both have had trouble extricating themselves from previous entanglements and exploits. They are seeking pre-marital counseling with none other than "Rabbi Ari." (We have learned in an intervening episode written by Scott Buck that Brenda's dad was Jewish and her mother was "raised Catholic." Rick Cleveland's writing tells us through flashbacks that Brenda's parents were reprehensible in that they were both into sex orgies and didn't care if their young daughter stumbled upon them.)

When Nate's brother asks him out of curiosity whether he is contemplating conversion, Nate responds noncommittally, "I'm already circumcised."

In this second episode featuring the woman rabbi, written by Rick Cleveland, the subject of soul mates never comes up. Brenda does get the rabbi to admit that she's never been

married, though the latter does say with authority that she has counseled many couples in the congregation "before, during and after marriage." The rabbi announces that she has learned that "Marriage is different for different people" and that "You can't have a good marriage without honesty."

While discussing these sage guidelines in the sanctuary (!) after the counseling session, Nate, inspired by the rabbi's emphasis on truth, confesses something to Brenda that elicits from her a sigh of "Christ" (from her non-Jewish half?) and sends her into a tailspin of sexual promiscuity (unknownst to Nate). When the rabbi stops by Nate's house to give him the address of a man who wants a pre-arranged funeral, she notices his distress and invites herself in. Yet this rather forward and inappropriate act is defended by the writer as the rabbi's entre to bring Nate the message that "all of our actions have consequences."

Not unexpectedly, Episode 2 gives Nate the opportunity to say, "You don't look like a rabbi" and to grab at the hand of the rabbi-in-his-living-room. He is then reminded with already familiar rhetoric, "I am a rabbi, unavailable to you, not even in your wildest dreams. That's why you don't have trouble being honest with me. There's nothing at stake."

Why do I get the impression that the series will not let matters stop there? And why do I distrust the restraint and propriety of a rabbi whose theological vocabulary begins and ends with "soul mate" and who appears to wear a mezuzah around her neck, an act of "superstition" decried by no less a sage and theologian than Maimonides?

JACOBSON

Continued from page 11

minds at Marriott about franchising was the combination of an anemic return to shareholders from hotel properties (because of burgeoning mortgage interest rates) and a unique twist applied by the corporation to the franchising concept itself.

Instead of waiting for others to build hotels and purchasing them to operate as franchises, Marriott plunged into the building business itself, offering franchises to an enthusiastic line-up of investors ready to piggy-back on the Marriott logo. The result was spectacular: within 20 years Marriott had become the largest hotel management company in the world—and one of the most profitable.

A second challenge to the Marriott corporate mentality arrived in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the company's cash flow became so large that constructive uses for the surplus had to be found. Unlike other firms that began to diversify by putting money into all kinds of businesses, Marriott decided to stick to what it knew best—the hotel management business, but once again with an added kicker.

Although it had always been an upscale operation in the 4- to 5-star full-service hostelry category, Marriott decided to venture into the small-size, medium-price, high-style unit. The Courtyard by Marriott opened in 1983 amid great secrecy. This was soon followed by other successful entries into the budget/limited-service market by Marriott Suites, Residence Inns, and Fairfield Inns.

By 1997 Marriott had extended its control over this market sector by acquiring the Renaissance, Ramada, and New World groups of hotels. More recently Marriott persuaded the upscale Ritz-Carlton chain to

join its organization. Although all these hotels function as independent units, they are part of the Marriott family and are expected to assist each other when necessary.

The greatest and most serious challenge exploded unexpectedly in 1991 when, after Marriott's unprecedented \$6 billion in hotel sales, the real estate market collapsed, leaving the company with a lot of unsold franchises and barrels of red ink. It was the period of the demise of the Canadian Reichmann empire and many other conglomerate giants. Needless to say, the Marriott people did not escape unscathed: painful layoffs occurred, and belt-tightening exercises were introduced.

These moves, however, were inadequate to meet the debt hemorrhaging that was gravely damaging the corporation. The solution was found in a controversial 1993 accounting and business decision that saw Marriott split its operations into two major companies: the first, the real estate section and the debt associated with it, and the second, a new, debt-free spin-off management company which was able to go after new contracts and bring some financial equilibrium back into the company. Despite initial stockholder unhappiness, the scheme worked, and both companies were transfused back to robust good health.

The maintenance of good health in the management of

what is now a string of almost 2,000 Marriott hotels, food-service agencies, and senior citizen retirement facilities is as much a function of attitude as it is of good business procedures. The term "corporate culture" is often used to describe the prevailing business philosophy associated with the Marriott Corp., but it is not infallible.

KAMINSKY

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Please join me in congratulating these women for their efforts and the energy they have already expended, and will be called upon in the future to expend, on our collective behalf.

BULKA

Continued from page 7

Jews must stand in awe and admiration of individuals who make an obviously overwhelming gesture to embrace Judaism. As excited as the community may be about the prospect, it cannot be so eager for this boost to its ego that it is oblivious to the ultimate welfare of the prospective convert. If, through discouragement, the convert actually rethinks the matter and has a change of heart, then the discouragement has done exactly what it was intended to do—to screen out those whose understanding of the implications of the conversion is minimal.

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